Information and Cultural Centres in Indian Embassies

39. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether all our Embassies and High Commissions are having Information and Cultural Centres attached;

(b) if so, names of Embassies in O.I.C. countries having Information and Cultural Centres attached and the nature of activities they are carrying on; and

(c) what are the steps taken up by our missions in O.I.C. countries to counter the Pakistan's anti-Indian propaganda?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Every Indian Embassy abroad has an Information Wing. In addition, Indian Council for Cultural Relations has established Cultural Centres in ten countries.

(b) In all the Indian Embassies in O.I.C. countries, there exists Information Wings. Of the ten Cultural Centres, established by Indian Council for Cultural Relations, four are in O.I.C. countries, namely Egypt (Cairo), Indonesia (Jakarta), Kazakhstan (Almaty), and Uzbekistan (Tashkent).

The Information Wings look after the information, publicity and cultural work of the embassies. Their regular activities include dissemination of publicity material including pictorial description, video films, pamphlets etc. to local dignitaries, prominent persons, opinion makers and academic institutions, maintenance of libraries in Indian Missions, arranging press briefings for visiting Indian dignitaries etc. The activities of Cultural Centres are to organise lectures, talks, films shows, exhibitions etc. on various aspects of India. Besides, some of the centres organise regular classes on Indian music, dance and yoga.

(c) Countering Pakistan's anti-India propaganda in the O.I.C. countries is an ongoing process. The Government and the Indian Missions continuously monitor such activities, particularly relating to Kashmir and the condition of Muslims in India. Swift, comprehensive and effective action is taken to counter Pakistan's false and motivated propaganda. Factual information is regularly provided to decision makers; the media; and the Governments of these countries through the Indian Missions abroad as well as through the Missions of the O.I.C. countries in India. The Governments of these countries are also briefed during visits of high level delegations to India and from India to these countries.

Passport Advisory Council

40. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Passport Advisory Councils in the Regional Passport Offices have been constituted;

(b) if not, the reasons for not constituting the Passport Advisory Councils; and

(c) by when the Passport Advisory Councils are going to be constituted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The proposal is under the active consideration in consultation with the State Governments concerned. The Councils will be constituted as soon as these consultations are complete.

Modification in the NPT

41. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has called for necessary modification in the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT)